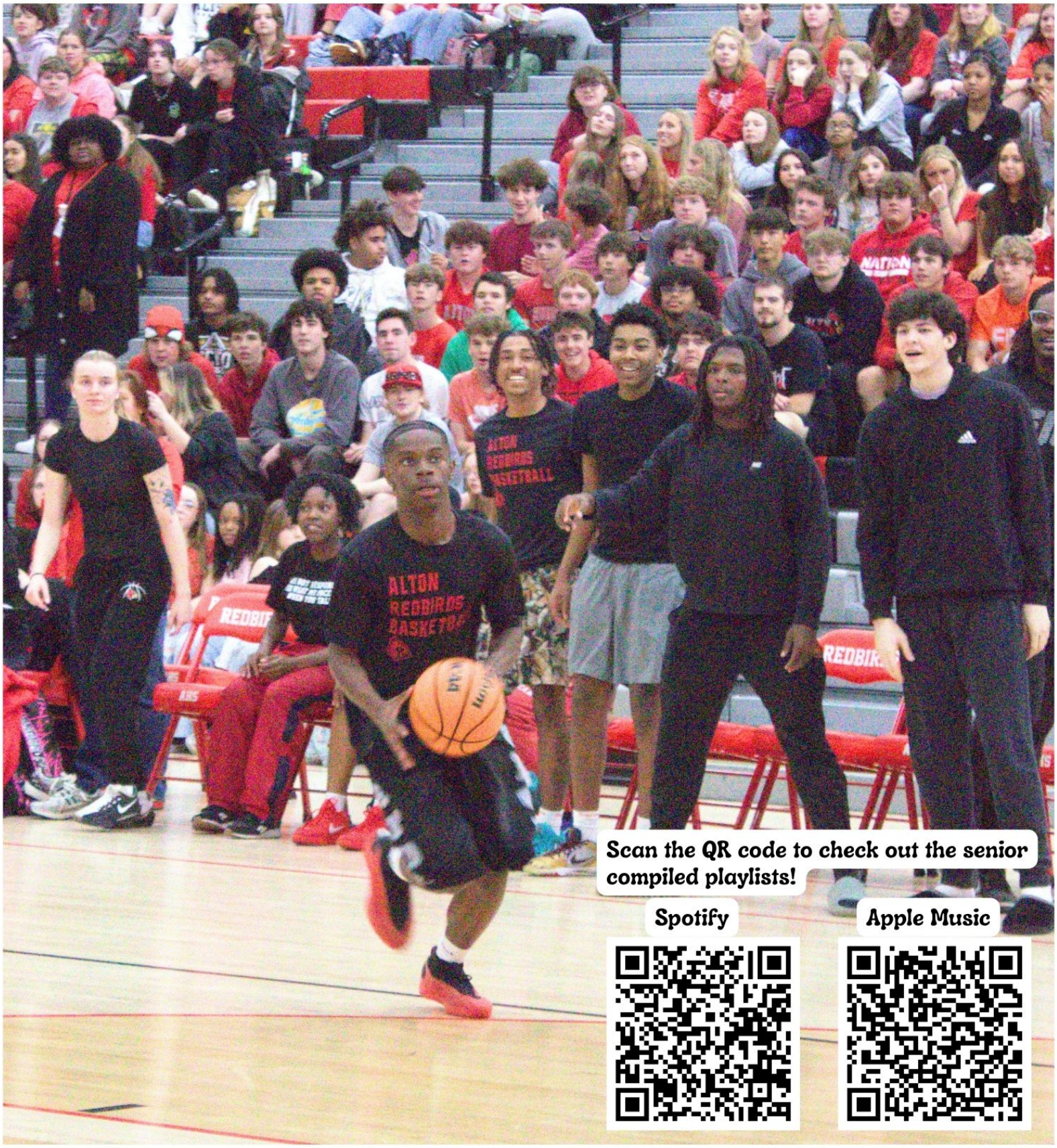
THE REDBIRD WORD

Volume 100 Issue 8 Celebrating 100 years!



Alton High School, 4200 Humbert Rd., Alton, Ill. 62002, Room B136

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor-In-Chief	Leigha Cole
Social Media Manager	Raye Holmes
Web Editor	Kolten Clore
Photo/Art Editor	Juliette Meza
Broadcast Editor	Garrett Stafford
Features Editor	Lily Waltz
Sports Editor	Kyridas Orr
Sports Editor	Heaven Everage
Copy Editor	Stella Cowan
Copy Editor	Victoria Strowmatt
Adviser	April Gray
Seniors	Leigha Cole Stella Cowan Heaven Everage Kyridas Orr Victoria Strowmatt Lily Waltz Byron Williams Jordan Womack

Editorial policy: The Redbird Word and The Daily Bird operate as public forums of expression. Readers can email letters to the editor at the.redbird.word@gmail.com Expressions made in these student-led publications are in no way an expression of the district or the school board.

ABOUT THE COVER

Senior Tysean Jones prepares to shoot the ball as the student team cheers him on during the staff versus student basketball game at the pep rally on April 2.
Photo by Juliette Meza, Photo & Arts Editor.

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@the_dailybird

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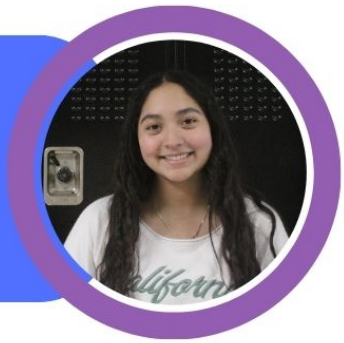


FIELD DAY PAGE 26

LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear senior class,

As you approach the final chapter of your high school journey, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the important contribution you have made to our school community. Your time at Alton High School has left a lasting impact, and it has been a privilege to watch you grow as students, leaders and individuals. I am incredibly proud to serve as your principal and to have had the opportunity to be part of your journey.

From the very beginning, you embraced what it means to be a Redbird. Your pride, resilience and dedication to one another have helped cultivate a positive and supportive school culture that will carry forward beyond your graduation. Whether in the classroom, on athletic fields, on stage or in the halls, you have consistently represented our school with integrity and heart.

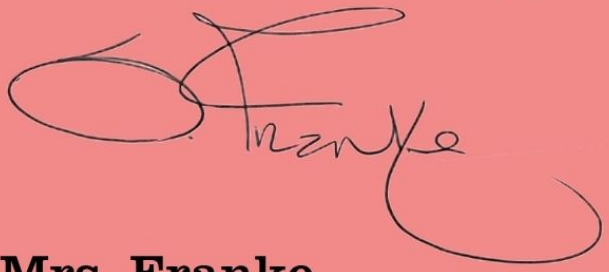
This year, in particular, you demonstrated leadership during periods of change. You helped set the tone with the implementation of our new cell phone policy, demonstrating responsibility and setting a positive example for underclassmen. Your willingness to adapt and lead by example played a significant role in maintaining a focused and respectful learning environment.

Additionally, you navigated new academic structures, including the updated ACT testing process and the introduction of Academic Lab. Rather than simply adjusting, many of you took ownership, using these opportunities to grow, seek support and strive for academic excellence. Your efforts have helped us refine these systems for future students.

What stands out most, however, is your voice. You advocated for yourselves and others, working collaboratively with teachers, administration and your peers to strengthen our school community. Your questions, suggestions and collaborative spirit have made our school a better place.

As you prepare to take your next steps, I encourage you to carry these qualities with you, the courage to lead, the willingness to collaborate and a commitment to making thoughtful, decisions that positively influence those around you. These traits will continue to define you long after you leave our halls.

Thank you for the legacy you leave behind. Once a Redbird, always a Redbird.



Mrs. Franke

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Class of 2026,

From middle school friend group fallouts to the ones I love today, our time all together is coming to an end. Senior year is the time to reflect on how the past four years have affected your life and decide your next move. It's your time to look at the last 13 years, whether you come from another town or even just your small Evangelical Elementary classroom.

As our dreams are beginning to come true, we're approaching unbelievable opportunities and most of us are preparing to adjust to a new way of life. Most of all, a new life without Mr. Bergin. If you ask me, I'd say we'll be alright. This goodbye doesn't amount to Dr. Bannister leaving us.

Memories of our collective Zoom downfall, sights of my first car on the streets and the smell of Otis Spunkmeyer cookies remind me that our last day in these halls approaches on May 16. I'm sure all of you can agree that we're better people for having known each other and have learned enough from each other to confidently move onto this next chapter. Fortunately, I was lucky enough to spend my time with people that I was able to consider as family and hope you all share my excitement to continue building new friendships.

Remember to be kind to yourselves and others in this next wave of life. Adjusting can be difficult, and that's okay. It's important to give yourselves grace while we learn how to navigate our own routes. I sincerely hope all of you are able to find where you belong positively.

So seniors, let's dance at prom like we've never before and say our goodbyes. I'm not sure how many of you know this, but this is not the end, only the beginning, and there is life beyond high school.

Best of luck,
Leigha Cole
Editor-In-Chief

SAYING GOODBYE TO OUR RETIRING STAFF...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORK TOWARDS OUR HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE!

Vernon Curvey
Assistant Principal

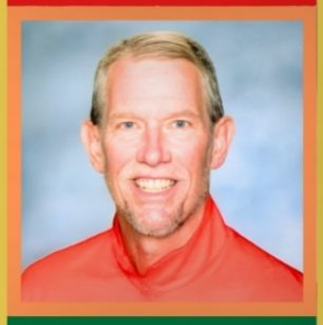
Photo by Victoria Strowmatt, Copyeditor

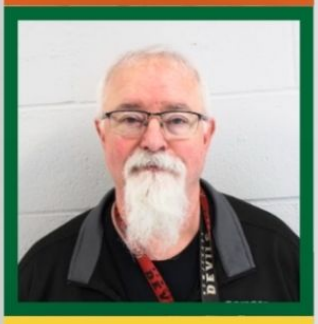
Mike Brey
Assistant Principal

Photo by Leigha Cole, Editor-In-Chief

Christopher Kusnerick
Athletic Director

Photo courtesy of Christopher Kusnerick





Brian Bergin
CTE Division Chair

Photo by Victoria Strowmatt, Copyeditor

Succila Jones
Special Education Teacher

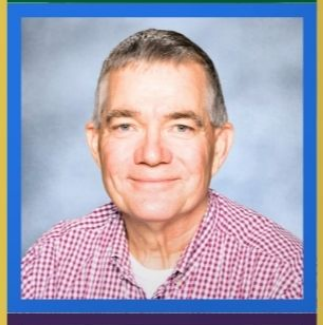
Photo by Victoria Strowmatt, Copyeditor

Jeffrey Warren
Home & Auto Teacher

Photo by Victoria Strowmatt, Copyeditor

Don Davis
English Teacher

Photo courtesy of Bridget Heck



LaJeanne Moore
Registrar

Photo courtesy of Bridget Heck

Carolyn Connors
Study Hall TA

Photo courtesy of Bridget Heck

William Stanton
Safety Team Member

Photo by Victoria Strowmatt, Copyeditor

Laura Lauschke
Math Division Chair

Photo by Victoria Strowmatt, Copyeditor

Lexa Browning
Graphic Design

Photo courtesy of Lexa Browning

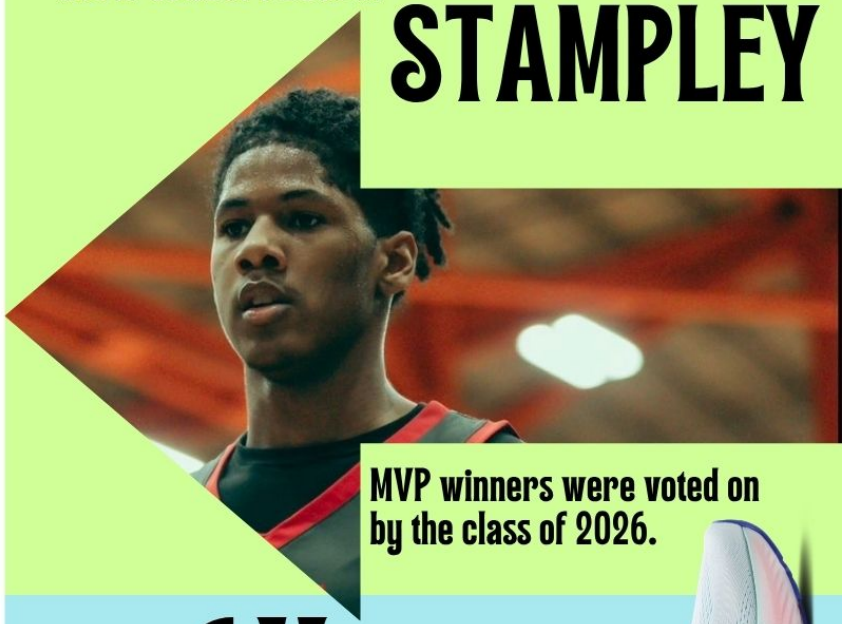
98

Total games played

1620

Total points scored
(New school record)

SEMAJ STAMPLEY



MVP winners were voted on by the class of 2026.

6X

COLLECTIVE RECORDS BROKEN
2 STATE, 4 SCHOOL

4X

STATE MEDALIST

RAYNA RAGLIN

Seniors compiled their favorite songs. Check out the QR code on the front page to tune in!

Hey Jude - The Beatles

This Twilight Garden - The Cure

Wish You Were Here - Pink Floyd

Fade Into You - Mazzy Star

This Must Be The Place - Talking Heads

Story Of My Life - One Direction

Kiss Me Thru The Phone - Soulja Boy

Eyes Wlithout A Face - Billy Idol

Can't Stop - Red Hot Chili Peppers

Night on the Bayou

Students Deck Out For Night On The Bayou With River Ready Energy

By Kyridas Orr, Sports Editor

With prom approaching, many prepare for this memorable night.

For many students, this night is a way for them to express their taste in fashion and is the last chance to celebrate with friends before graduation and the start of something new.

Preparing for prom isn't just the advisers responsibility. Junior class president Eden Warford is responsible for creating vision boards and themes which are then presented to the student council and voted on by advisory classes.

The prom theme this year is Night on the Bayou.

Responsibilities for student council sponsors Kristi Doering, Emily Mangi and Fiona Griswold are very different from one another.

Doering is responsible for decorations. Mangi is responsible for making phone calls to make sure prom happens and Griswold is responsible for all the paperwork.

Doering and Warford have been collaborating on making sure that the decorations correspond with the theme.

"I've been with Eden looking for decoration," Doering said, "We have been talking to the balloon lady and much more."

Along with prom, there comes royalty. The court for prom is nominated by the juniors, and nominations open on April 21.

Juniors get to nominate two people (one boy and one girl) to be on the prom court.

After the nomination polls close, the top six boys and girls will be announced on the court. At prom, those 12 people will be voted on to see who is the prom queen and king.

Those who attend the dance will get "swag bags." "It will be something cool to have as a memento from prom," Doering said.

Throughout the day on May 9, student council members spend the morning decorating and setting up for the night.

Prom will be held May 9 at Lewis and Clark Community College in the Commons from 7-10 p.m.

Senior Royalty Look Back On Their Spotlights

By Heaven Everage, Sports Editor

MORE THAN A CROWN

Homecoming king Grant Ely and queen Kyridas Orr pose together shortly after the coronation ceremony at the 2025 homecoming dance.
Photo courtesy of Kyridas Orr

Prom king Taydem Harrington and queen Rayna Raglin pose together shortly after the coronation ceremony at prom in 2025.
Photo courtesy of Rayna Raglin

High school is shaped by the moments students share and the connections they build, and for this year's prom and homecoming royalty, those moments reflect friendship, involvement and school pride.

In the spring of 2025, seniors Rayna Raglin and Taydem Harrington were named prom queen and prom king, an honor voted on by their classmates.

Raglin is also involved in track and field, where she won a state title in the 60-meter dash with a time of 7.42 seconds.

Harrington said being named prom king was an exciting moment that reflected the support of those around him.

"I felt great winning because I'm a well-known athlete, have a large social circle and am genuinely kind and approachable," Harrington said.

Harrington was recognized as a state champion in April 2024 as a member of the Alton Special Olympics basketball team, and he said that same sense of support carried into prom night.

"If it wasn't for my friends and everyone at AHS, I couldn't have done it," Harrington said. "I couldn't be more grateful."

Months later, in October, seniors Kyridas Orr and Grant Ely were named homecoming queen and homecoming king during the school's annual celebration.

Orr said hearing her name announced was both exciting and meaningful as she reflected on her high school experience.

"I wanted to share my appreciation for everyone who had voted for me, and I was extremely excited," Orr said.

As a member of the girls' basketball team that advanced to state, Orr said the sport helped shape her by teaching discipline and time management. She said the relationships she built throughout high school played a major role in the recognition.

I've made a lot of connections throughout my four years," Orr said. "I think it's because of those connections and friendships."

Ely said being named homecoming king was a reminder of the friendships he built and the support he felt from his classmates.

"It was awesome," Ely said. "It was just a feeling of joy, and not only from winning, but knowing everybody had my back."

As a member of the football team, Ely said his involvement helped him connect with others and create lasting memories. He said his favorite part of high school has been making people smile and enjoying time with friends.

"The best part was just being able to make people smile and have a good time with everybody," Ely said

These recognitions highlight more than a single moment, showing how involvement, achievement and strong connections can define a student's high school experience.

BEST OF

Eden Hough

WIN A NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Jewel Lumpkins

FAMOUS RAPPER/SINGER

Tiffany Zheng

MILLIONAIRE

Natalia Cuadrado

BROADWAY STAR

Ethan Eckhouse

A REALITY TV STAR

Winners were voted on by the class of 2026.

Lucille Cassenti

BIGGEST TEACHERS PET

Grant Ely

BEST TO BRING HOME TO MOM & DAD

THE BEST

BIG O

BEST NICKNAME Oren Asher

XOXO

Kenlea Jamison

BEST SHOULDER TO CRY ON

SENIOR
SUNRISE
CLASS
HOMECOMING COURT

OF 2025
Canon
1/500 4.5
100-5494

FRESH START

Facing Graduation: How To Move On

By Leigha Cole, Editor-In-Chief

Graduation is supposed to feel like a clean start–but it can feel a lot heavier than that for many students. As each name is called upon the stage, the reality becomes as true as it can be. Moving on doesn't have to be all about leaving old routines behind, but finding individual purpose in this new beginning.

Leaving high school comes with an immense amount of pressure that is often minimized. Making decisions about college, work, trades or the military can put weight on those that might not have found their passions yet. There is no singular correct path after graduation. If we're all being honest, no one really knows what they're doing right now. Some are simply better at walking with the uncertainty. So, what's the plan?

Society is structured to seem like every 18-year-old has a clear plan–we've learned that this is unrealistic. Deny all you've heard about graduation requiring some sort of personal ending. Sometimes friendships do fade without explanation, questions remain unanswered and feelings remain unidentified. Moving on doesn't have to make sense at the moment, but you certainly don't need permission to make personal growth.

Movement beyond high school is hardly linear. In fact, there is much less of a structured routine from here on out, so accepting the uncertainty of it can allow for even more growth beyond a limited environment. Growth is entirely dependent on your willingness to evolve even if it's uncomfortable.

Outside of the shackles of such a social ecosystem, you can experiment freely with being the person you want to be and living the way you want to live your life.

Holding on too tightly to the past can prevent new things from coming in. Even though friendships don't have to end, proven on page 14, it's important to live in the moment and create new memories.

This next step isn't about perfecting your five year plan or meeting unrealistic expectations; it's but taking things one day at a time. It's about taking a breath and looking at where you are, allowing yourself to learn from your mistakes and discover things that you may not have been exposed to before.

Let's Keep in Touch!

How to Maintain Friendships Post-Grad

By Stella Cowan, Copy Editor

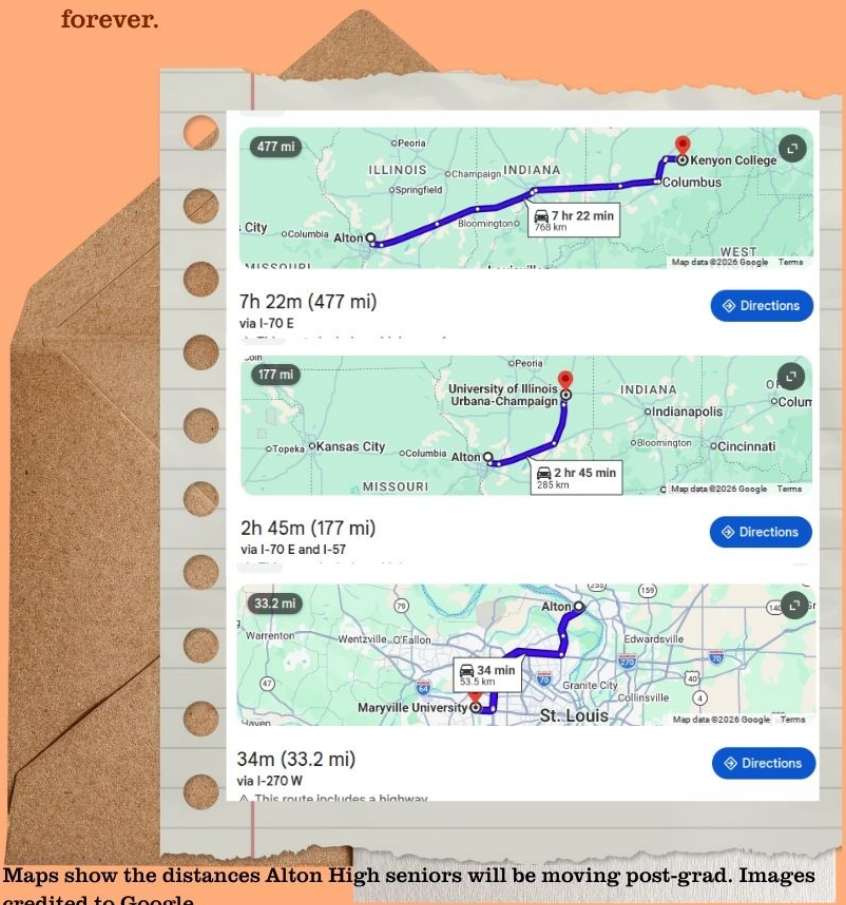
As the school year draws to a close seniors begin preparing to graduate and move on, whether it be staying close to home or flying the nest. This period of transition raises the all-time question: How (and with who?) will I keep in touch after graduation?

Luckily, the age of technology bridges the gap between distance. If you find yourself preparing to load a car and drive across state lines, or even just across town, make sure to use technology to your advantage. As much as it sounds like common sense, scheduling bi-weekly calls or video chats can help maintain the connection across miles or busy days. Face-to-face visuals or audible conversations are much more effective than simply texting.

If you happen to remain close to friends, family or a romantic partner, make sure to plan regular activities and visits. Remaining in contact does not cancel out the need for conscious effort to connect. If you do plan to move away, spend as much time over the summer as you can gathering memories and time with those you love. Plan definite meet-ups and activities for breaks—plans, not hypothetical "we shoulds!"

Long distance relationships, whether romantic, familial or platonic, require focused effort and new ways to break up routine. Try to find fun, different ways to connect, such as exchanging vlogs of your week or sending letters the old-fashioned way (add some fun surprises like physical copies of photos or a fun sticker!). Grab a bowl of fresh popcorn and schedule an online—or in-person—movie together, or create shared playlists and photo albums.

While life after graduation is a time of changing paths for everyone, the shift does not mean friendships become any less important. If anything, it opens windows for new phases in each relationship. It's important to decide who you want to be a part of your new life path and work to maintain a connection with them. Just because a relationship looks different does not mean it needs to fade away—circumstances change, but a good friendship is forever.



Maps show the distances Alton High seniors will be moving post-grad. Images credited to Google.

Senior memories

Being a Redbird Nest leader has really shown me how connected we are as a school. Coming together with themes and crazy nights make every game we attend just so much fun for the community.
- Ethan Eckhouse

I have had an amazing senior year, so I can't really choose one aspect of it. I feel like I've grown closer with my friends, made a lot of new ones, and spent a lot of time appreciating everything that I've gotten to be a part of while at Alton High.
- Stella Cowan

The highlight of my senior year was when I played my sousaphone in Marching 100 for the last time. I will always hold those memories from band forever.
-Savannah Spinks

The thing I will miss most about high school is going to the Early Childhood Center weekly.
-Margaret Powers

Being a varsity cheerleader, making prom court, having fun classes with friends and all the bonds I have created.
- Kayden Resimus-Spicer

favorite teachers

Winners were voted on by the class of 2026.

Todd Fortschneider

It's an honor to be chosen as favorite teacher by the Senior class. I'm proud to be a Redbird and have the opportunity to lead them into their futures.

Todd Fortschneider

Kelly Paige

To the Class of 2026:

Being voted as one of your favorite teachers means so much to me that, I'm having a hard time expressing it, and not because I forgot what I was saying this time. Knowing I've gotten to be a small part of your journey is such a privilege, and that I was able to make you feel supported, heard, or comfortable reminds me that is all so worth it. More than anything else though, it reminds me how lucky I am to have such wonderful students. (Especially the BioMED ONES!) P.S. Wear your Sunscreen!

With Love + Pride

Daniel Pettus

I'm honored to be named a favorite teacher by a class that never hesitated to brave the weather, the bugs, or the mud. Your curiosity in the field made every lesson an adventure. Thank you for making this year such a memorable one!

- Mr. Pettus

Laura Plummer

It has been an amazing journey and a joy watching the growth of the class of 2026 from tentative underclassmen into confident leaders who are going to make this world a better place. I am so proud of my seniors and so very grateful for their dedication and the impact they have left on Elton H.S. and me!

Laura Plummer

So Long,

Teachers and staff give their well wishes to the seniors!

A big shout out to the class of 2026! It's been fun getting to know so many of you through the last few years. Best of luck wherever life takes you! Enjoy it, make the most of it, and don't forget where it all started!
- Joshua Gaither

Class of 2026—go see the world. Be really kind to others, you never know what they are going through. Don't forget to wear your retainers and always rise to the moment—dress with intention, as if you already belong where you're going. Root for the underdog. Try things that scare you, meet people who change you, and don't stress your flaws—they might become your edge. Go out into this big beautiful world and make us all so proud!
-Bridget Heck

Proud of you all—seriously. Keep showing up, chasing what matters, and being real. The world needs your energy and ideas. Stay curious, stay kind, and don't forget—you've got this. Go make something amazing happen.
-Joel Gherardini

To the Class of 2026, you were my very first freshmen here at AHS, and it has been incredible watching you grow into the people you are today. You'll always hold a special place in my heart! Congratulations, and I'm so proud of you!
- Señora Adams

To my favorite Seniors!! Caleb Bethell, Dakoda Hayes, Taydem Harrington, Eli London, Jaedon Michelotti, Jackson Linke and Jujuan Taylor!! May you find great joy and success in your future. Remember the priceless memories you made at AHS! I am so proud of each and everyone of you!! Best Wishes to you All!
Love,
Mrs. Croxford

Congratulations Class of 2026! I am so proud of you, and all of your hard work getting to this point. Don't forget to stay true to who you are, and find the whimsy in life!
-Sarah Prott

You did it! You made it through early mornings, late nights, self-doubt, and probably more challenges than you can count. Be proud. Remember, you don't need to have it all figured out, you just take the next step and keep on going. Trust yourself and make your future amazing!!
-Angela Barry

To the Class of 2026,
First, congratulations. Work hard, do your best, but make time to have a life. Find something outside of work that matters to you and get involved in it. And, always know that there are people in the world who care about and want the best for you.
Mrs. Bachman

Farewell,

This is a special class for me because I started here as an SRO your freshman year. I'm extremely proud of this class. I've really enjoyed watching you grow and mature over the last four years. I know you will do great things!
-Brad Woelfel

If you rely on one thing constantly, you will speak with its voice.
-Pierce Langford

Congratulations to the Class of 2026! Your hard work and resilience have brought you to this milestone. As you move forward, embrace new opportunities with confidence and purpose. We are proud of you and wish you success, happiness, and bright futures ahead.

Dr. Adams-Watkins

Class of 2026: I will miss having you in my classroom, but I am so excited to see what is in store for your future!
-Matthew Sautman

As you prepare to leave high school, you step into a world of possibility, uncertainty, and opportunity. Take with you the memories, growth, and strength you didn't know you had. Whatever path you choose, move forward with purpose, courage, and integrity—you are ready. Life starts now.
-Mrs. Williams

Class of 2026! Where did the time go? It feels like just yesterday you were starting this journey, now here you are—four years later. Time really does fly! As you step into your next chapter, remember, it's the beginning. Push forward, chase goals, build your future. Congratulations!!! Ms. Covington

THE LOADING DOCK
ON THE RIVER
GRAFTON - ILLINOIS

Au Revoir,

Good Luck in your future! I wish you the best! Be all you can be! Follow your dreams!
Always treat people like you want to be treated!
Lori Campion - Athletic Secretary

CLASS OF 2026! Thank you for starting AHS with me as my first class ever! You helped make this place home. Your goofiness and love for life is contagious. I am so excited for you to take that energy into adulthood. Every single one of you can change the world if you set your mind to it. Stay wonderful and spread happiness. <3
Big love always, Ms. Cruz

Congratulations on graduation Class of 2026! Soar high Redbirds and make the future count!
-Cami Giertz

Congratulations class of 2026! I'm so proud of you all, but especially the biomed students! Keep pushing!
-Kelly Paige

Congratulations! Go make some memories and have lots of adventures!
-Jessica Nemec

Congratulations class of 2026!! Remember, your legacy won't be your title, or your resume. It will be how people felt after meeting you. Be unforgettable for the right reasons.
- Yvonne Green

"Graduation is much like retirement—stepping away from one door, as new ones open before you and the world stretches wide with possibility. I carry with me a piece of each person I've met, and my life is richer and more meaningful because of you all."
-Vernon Curvey

Congratulations Class of 2026, we are so proud of your accomplishments in high school and incredibly excited for the future!
-Matt Chesner

Class of 2026 you are all Meowvelous in my book! Learn something new everyday, vote because your voice matters, and never turn down a donut. Step outside your comfort zone every chance you get. Stay true to yourself and leave the world more interesting because of you.
-Mrs. Hilgert

Congratulations to the Class of 2026. Each of you has run your own race to get to this point, KEEP GOING! Go Redbirds!
-Dylan Dudley

"The beautiful thing about learning is that nobody can take it away from you" - B.B. King.
You earned this Class of 2026! Stay curious. Stay engaged! Keep learning!
-Bill Schwartz, District Art Therapist

Congratulations Class of 2026! Remember, "Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt." -John Muir
-Dan Pettus

Toodle-oo,

" Congratulations, Redbirds! This is a commendable achievement, and many people are proud of you. Continue to grow, glow, and go as far as you can—there are NO limits to greatness. Problems are opportunities to express your potential; solve them, and prosperity will follow. Be the only you—the world needs you."
- Mr. Howard

Congratulations Class of 2026! I hope tomorrow will bring a better you and never give up on your hopes and dreams!
Thanks for your support,
Succila Jones

Class of 2026, I've watched you grow, overcome challenges, and show incredible resilience. Remember to embrace every opportunity, follow your passions, and never underestimate your own strength. Carry your "Redbird Pride" with you as you step boldly into your future.
-Dorothy Mitchell

Congratulations! In every decision that you need to make, ask Him and He will give you your answer.
-Succila Jones

Seniors, I have enjoyed knowing you and having many of you in my class. Your 8th grade Honors class will always be my favorite, for yours stood out for its welcoming environment, where all students felt included and supported regardless of their differences. Bonne chance, buena suerte, and good luck!
Stephanie Hawkins

"Take pride in how far you've come. Have faith in how far you can go. But don't forget to enjoy the journey." (Michael Josephson)
Congratulations class of 2026
Ms. Edwards

To the class of 2026: you are all going to do amazing things. It has been an honor to be your teacher. Congratulations!!
-Mhirakol Jackson

Good luck to you all. Enjoy your new endeavors. Be safe.
-Kelli Veach

Congratulations class of 2026! Fly High Redbirds!
-Shannon Norris

Congratulations Class of 2026! I am so proud of you! This is just the beginning of all the amazing things you're going to do. Soar high Redbirds!
-Chris Petrea

SENIORS!!!
Go out into the world and do great things! Please know that you will always have someone back here in Alton supporting you!
Mrs. Anderson

John Irving once said, "If you are lucky enough to find a way of life you love, you have to find the courage to live it." Class of 2026: go out there and make your dreams come true!
Congratulations!
Mrs. Hart

Goodbye!

Congratulations to the TRIO/Upward Bound graduating seniors!! It has been a pleasure watching you grow! I can't wait to watch your next steps! I will always be your biggest fan! Go be great!
-Ms. Herron

Words of advice:
1. Travel
2. Adopt a shelter pet
3. Love is love
4. Learn new things
4. Always remember the importance of the humanities!

-Sarah Thomas

Good luck to the class of 2025. Your futures are unwritten and just waiting for you to fill the pages. I hope you fill them with the most amazing stories about your successes, achievements, family, and especially, the happiest memories of a life well lived.

From Mrs. Pollard

Congratulations class of 2026! You have accomplished amazing things already and I have no doubt you will go on to achieve many more incredible things. Remember that while your achievements are certainly something to celebrate and take pride in, also take great great pride in your character and the impact you go on to make in this world. People will remember how you treated them and the positive impact you had on their life more than anything else. Coach Riley and I have been fortunate enough to be involved in many of your lives over the past several years and are honored to be a part of your team. Go have fun and do good things!
-Mckenna Riley

Congratulations Class of 2026! Graduation is a bittersweet milestone. We are so proud of you, but it is not easy to see you leave. You have helped shape our school culture, supported one another, and created a positive school experience for all to enjoy. Thank you for the energy, pride and heart that you brought to our district. We are incredibly proud of all that you have accomplished, and confident that you are ready for what comes next.

As you move forward, know that we will always be cheering you on. Once a Redbird, always a Redbird.

With pride and best wishes,
-Elaine Kane
Superintendent

To my seniors in J2 & J3,

Remember to put as much time and attention into the details of crafting your own story as you have telling the stories of others over the years. You all have been an exceptional crew, and the void will be loud without you here.

Class of 2026,

Your vibrancy and enthusiasm has been unmatched this year! Hold tight to that energy as you go out into the world and spread love and light wherever you go.

'Til next time,
Ms. Gray

National Honor Society Concludes Another Year

By Victoria Strowmatt, Copyeditor

On April 14, the National Honor Society Induction Ceremony was held which highlighted their work throughout the 2025-26 school year and their future members. National Honor Society (NHS) members are determined by their GPA and class. Students who are invited into NHS have to be upcoming seniors and have a weighted GPA of 3.75 or higher. NHS is co-sponsored by Angela Laaker and Carolyn Cramer.

In March upcoming members were emailed about their opportunity to be in NHS. Members' applications were due March 18. After that, the tapping ceremony began. Upcoming members were emailed about this ceremony occurring on April 14. Current members went to upcoming members' advisory classes and tapped them on the shoulder. The current member walked the upcoming member to the auditorium for their introduction. In this ceremony, upcoming members were introduced by the senior members who tapped them.

In the evening, the NHS candle lighting ceremony was held. President of NHS Tiffany Zheng, Vice President Rayna Raglin, Secretary Katie Krafka and Historian Stella Cowan highlighted the pillars of the foundation of NHS. These members spoke of the importance of character, leadership, scholarship and service. The first pillar of was introduced by Zheng.

"Having good character is not just about following rules," Zheng said. "It means consistently doing the right thing even when no one is watching. I have learned that a strong leader needs to have good character. It has enabled me to become the best member that I can be, even when the decisions may be difficult."

Zheng voiced that having character is an important pillar for the foundation of NHS. After the candle lighting ceremony, biology teacher Joshua Gaither spoke as a keynote speaker.

"I want to challenge you to continue being students worthy of the honor of your families, your peers and your teachers this year that's coming up," Gaither said. "Don't see the requirements, the assignments, the credits, the volunteer hours as hoops to be jumped through, but as opportunities to continue demonstrating your character."

The candle lighting ceremony highlights the important components of NHS in the community and to individuals. Seventy-five juniors were inducted this year. NHS commemorates future senior scholars of Alton High School paving a way for younger students.

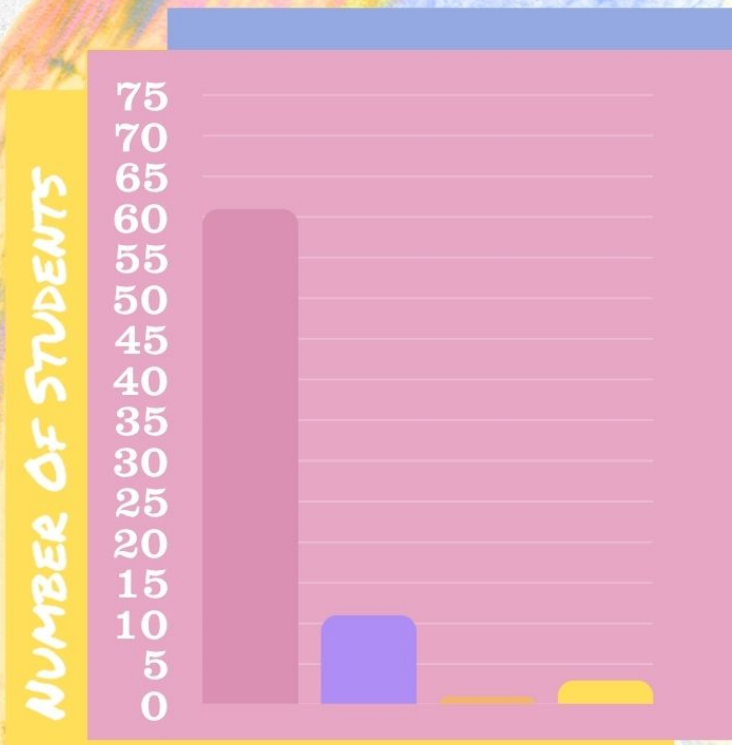
Junior Landon Davis shakes hands with Superintendent Elaine Kane before receiving his certificate at the National Honors Society Ceremony on April 14. *Photo by Victoria Strowmatt, Copyeditor*

To The Future

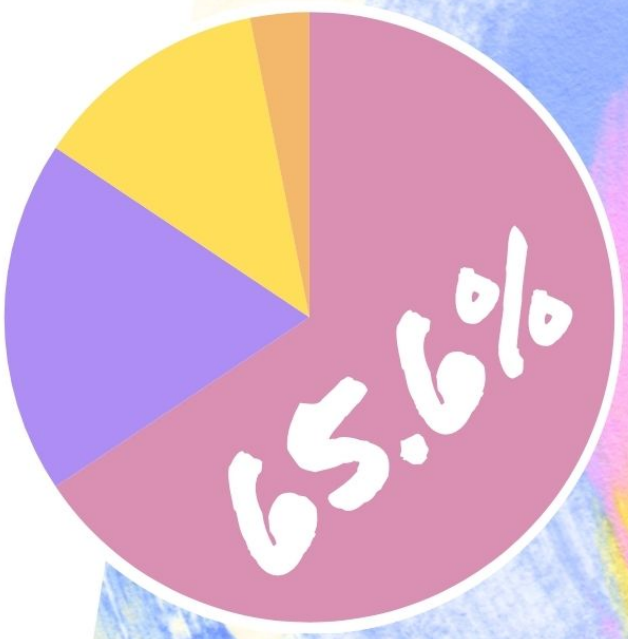
By Kolten Clore, Web Editor

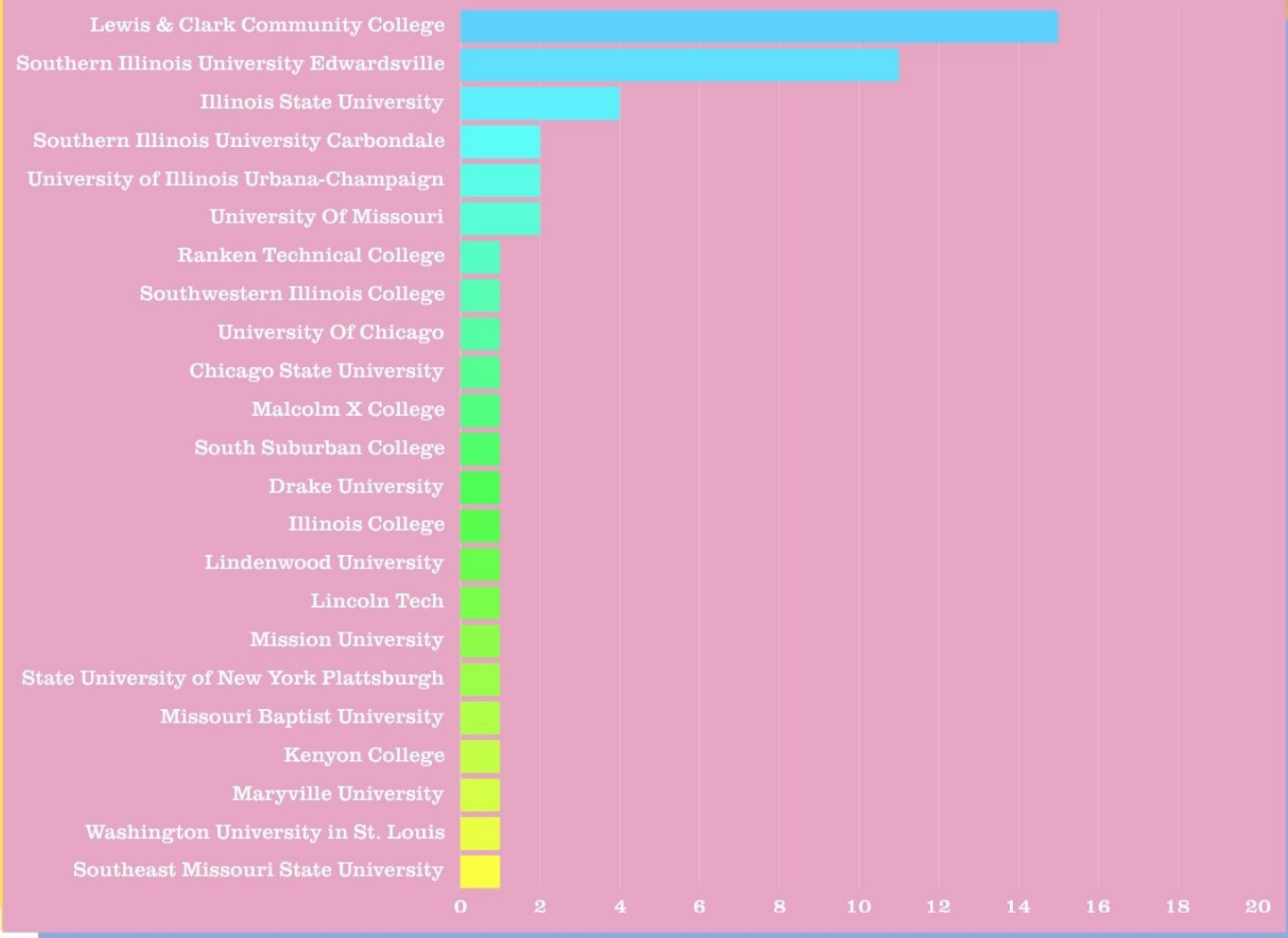
Seniors share their future plans. 81.4% are choosing to attend a college or vocational school!

- Attending College/Vocational School
- Going into the Work Force
- Taking a Gap Year
- Joining the Military

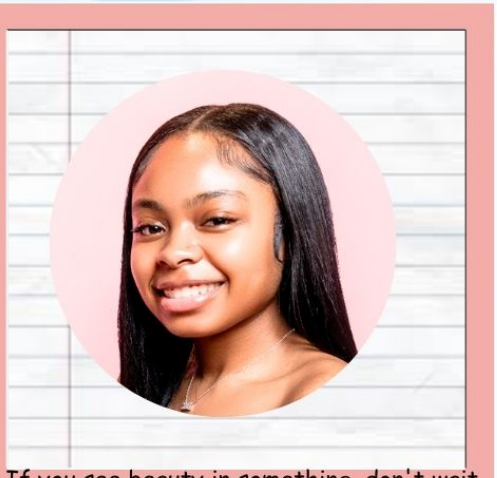


65.6% of all students continuing their education have chosen to attend a college or vocational school in Illinois.





DOWN THE ROAD: advice to underclassmen



If you see beauty in something, don't wait for others to agree. Just because you like it doesn't mean they have to.
-Paige White

It's important to do well in school, but you should explore life outside of it to find what you're really passionate about!
-Samuel Caughran

Do not slack!! Your GPA will affect you in the future and if it's low starting out you have to work extra hard to raise it.
-Kayden Resimius-Spicer

Grades are so important for college preparation, but they don't define you or your intelligence.
-Stella Cowan

Ignore the drama. If someone talks bad about you, let it be... you should look for the light and continue in your own journey.
-Savannah Spinks

Senior Field Day Makes A Comeback At Alton High

By Raye Holmes, Social Media Manager

On Friday, May 1, the senior class lined up based on what elementary school they attended. The seniors then did walk-throughs of their elementary school before finally arriving at Glazebrook Park to celebrate the last day of senior year.

Starting last year, Alton High has made an effort to put together a field day for seniors. This new tradition is run by student council advisers, the senior class president and the administration team.

"We worked with our administration quite a bit," student council sponsor Emily Mangi said. "Our administration is really good about wanting our students to enjoy school, want to be here and participate in the fun things ... but we also need to have a little bit of fun, especially for our seniors as a goodbye."

During the event planning last year, the organizers set up the activities. But this time around, the organizers give the choice to the students by giving them a chance to vote for what activities are set up.

"This year, we were a lot more intentional in the planning of it," student council sponsor Fiona Griswold said. "We certainly started talking about it earlier than we had, and Naeem [senior class president] sent out a poll to senior students asking them what they would like to see in the event."

The event is meant to celebrate the senior class and give them one last chance to create memories together.

"It is an important event because the seniors have a chance to hang out with their class for one last time and everyone gets to reminisce about their childhood," senior class president Naeem West said.

"I'm excited to go outside, enjoy nature and free food." Mia Sanchez

"I'm excited to beat Semaj in kickball :)" Grant Ely

"I'm ready to create memories with the class of 2026 for the last time." Semaj Stampley

"I'm excited to get out of school and hang out with my friends." Reese Hafertepe

GRADUATION

Seniors Set To Graduate In Milestone Ceremony

By Lily Waltz, Features Editor

The graduation ceremony will take place on May 16 in the main gym beginning at 10 a.m. Assistant Principal Vernon Curvey has been in charge of planning graduation for the past five years.

"We are asking them [seniors] to start being here around 8:30 because we want everybody in their rooms," Curvey said. "And they'll get those room assignments before then by 9 a.m."

To help relieve stress, if a student is running late, they will be able to find their spot and make it into line. These room assignments will be available to students on May 14, along with their cap and gown, diploma and four tickets for the ceremony. This will take place in the auditorium from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

"Everything will be handed out that day, and it will take place in the auditorium," Curvey said.

Due to the ceremony being such a wide-scale event, families will receive only four tickets. If families are late or have more than four members, there will be available seating in the auditorium and cafeteria to be broadcasted on multiple screens.

"It will be broadcast live on Riverbender - so for a lot of people, it's easier that way to stay home," Curvey said. "Also, parking is beyond difficult to come by on that day. There isn't a piece of asphalt left uncovered."

The cutoff time for families to enter the gym will be 9:45 a.m. and any time after that visitors will be directed to the cafeteria. This helps ensure that the ceremony stays special for all involved, as it has been a moment that many students and families have been looking forward to.

"There's some students that you're super excited to see them reach that completion; it's a beginning and an end," Curvey said. "It's the end of their high school career, but it's the beginning of everything else, and it just becomes exciting."

As seniors are counting down the days of receiving their diploma and walking the stage, the chaos of senior year can interfere fast. This big day is designed for students and families alike to celebrate each student's accomplishments. Enjoy these last few moments together, seniors.

Once a Redbird, Always a Redbird.

editor-in-chief

leigha cole

Hey Redbirds! My BFF Lydia and I are the only Journalism 3 students this year. She graduated early, so I was left with an empty Google Classroom and the remaining J2 students. From a Reporter, to Broadcast Editor, to now Editor-In-Chief, journalism has quickly become a passion in my life. Some people aren't meant for high school, and I'm one of those people. If it weren't for journalism, I don't think I would've graduated. With that, I plan on going to Southern Illinois University-Carbondale to major in Communications and minor in Journalism! Moving onto this next chapter of my life is what I'm excited for the most, no matter where it takes me. I'm glad to have came, but now I'm glad to go!

Lily Waltz

Features Editor

Hi guys! I'm Lily Waltz, and I have been the Features Editor for The Redbird Word this year. It has been such a blast being in journalism and I am so grateful for all of the friends I've made! While I am more than ready for my time in high school to be over, I know I will take all the things I've learned with me. After I finally graduate high school, I will be attending the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign where I will be majoring in Speech and Hearing Sciences to become a pediatric speech-pathologist. I can't wait to see what's in store for me, and I am forever grateful for everyone who has played a part in that!! Until next time, Redbirds!

Stella

Hi everyone! I'm Stella Cowan, and I have been a copyeditor for The Redbird Word this year. I've had an amazing time on the journalism staff as well as in high school in general, and I'll miss it! However, I'm even more excited to start a new part of my life. I will be moving to Ohio in June to attend Kenyon College and plan to major in Psychology. I can't wait to start a life on my own, and I look forward to making new friendships and memories in the upcoming years. However, my time at Alton High has significantly shaped me into who I am today, and I treasure the friendships and memories I have made here. I will miss my friends, family, and all of the people in my life. I want to thank them for everything they have given me during my time at Alton High!

COWAN

HEAVEN

Hi everyone! I'm Heaven Everage, and I have had the privilege of serving as a Sports Editor for The Redbird Word this year. One of the greatest lessons journalism has taught me is to not be afraid to put yourself out there. I joined journalism on my own last year simply because it interested me. I didn't know anyone at the time, but I knew it was something I wanted to pursue. Through journalism, I have had the opportunity to interview principals, coaches, and students I might not have otherwise connected with. Those experiences pushed me out of my comfort zone and have been incredibly rewarding. This August, I will be heading to college in Greensboro, North Carolina to attend North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. As I take this next step, "Putting yourself out there" is a mindset I plan to carry with me. So wherever you are, don't be afraid to put yourself out there. You never know where it might take you.

EVERAGE

Hey everyone! Im Kyridas Orr. I was a Sports Editor for journalism two. Journalism was quite the experience. I made many new friends, learned to communicate better, and to be more open with my ideas. My high school experience has been pretty good. Being a four-year varsity basketball player, a two-year varsity volleyball athlete, as well as participating in STUCO, Link Crew, Tatler, journalism, and being homecoming queen, all these things have played a role in shaping me into a student athlete. Although high school wasn't always the easiest, it gave me a sense of purpose. Waking up and getting to see all the staff and friends who made my days better made my high school experience better. Being in journalism has taught me many things, some I've forgotten, but other things I will remember. I plan to go to college for basketball and study criminal justice to become a US Marshal. I'm extremely grateful to my family, friends, and supporters for always believing in me.

KYRIDAS

ORR

Hello everyone! I've enjoyed my time being a copyeditor for the Redbird Word. I've learned over the years how important journalism is in media. In my opinion journalism is based on honesty, timeliness and clarity. After high school I plan to save up money for college and to move out. I want to become a ASL interpreter and a vet technician. I am so happy I was able to be in the RBW, being able to edit my own stories and be a part of publishing the RBW. This class gave me a whole new perspective of the RBW and Journalism. I encourage everyone to learn more about journalism.

Victoria Strowmat

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